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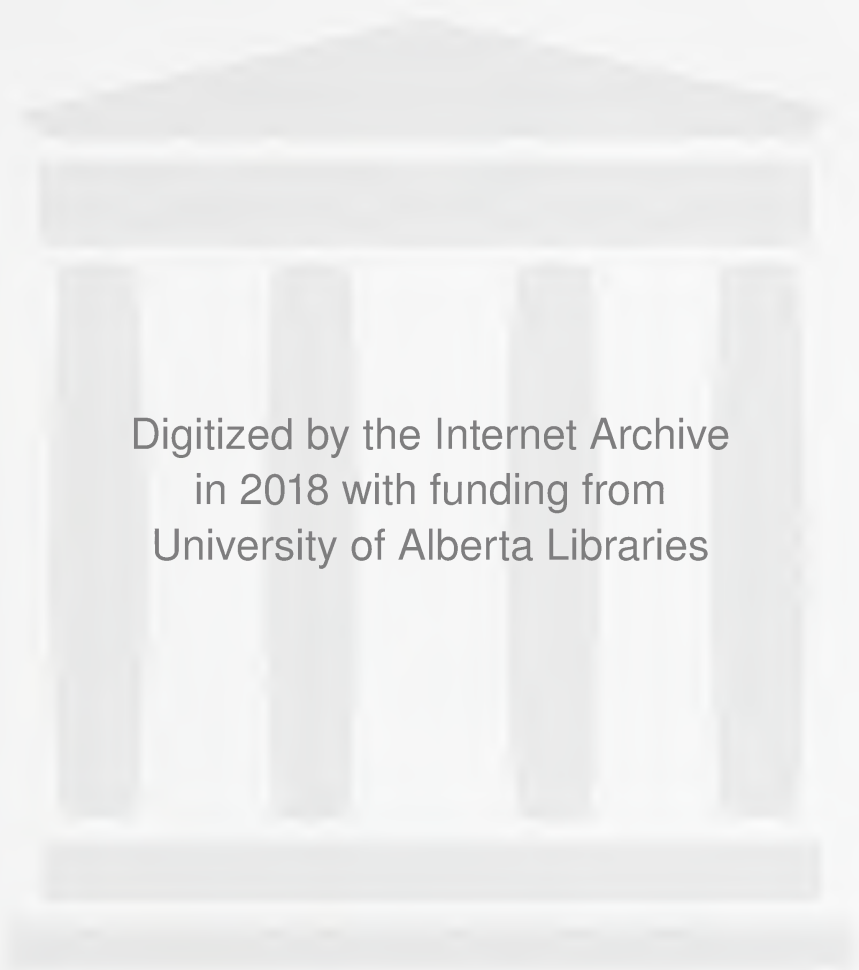
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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

A HISTORY OF THE RURAL HIGH SCHOOL  
IN ALBERTA

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
DIVISION OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

by

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Edmonton, Alberta

September, 1956



## ABSTRACT OF THESIS

Following World War I, there was a general demand in rural areas for schools which would offer secondary education. The elementary consolidated school and the two-room elementary school both gave some high school instruction, but the successful operation of these schools seemed limited by peculiar conditions common to certain areas of the province. Therefore, in 1921 the Secondary Consolidated School Act was passed to permit two or more local school districts to share the cost of forming a centralized high school.

However, in spite of generous Government grants, only nineteen Rural High School districts were formed. Most rural people chose the less expensive high school instruction offered in the one-room school.

Rural High Schools were located mainly in villages or towns. Only two consolidations were truly rural, and one of them, Angle Lake, was soon forced to discontinue operation.

The Rural High Schools that were organized gave a valuable service to their areas. Nevertheless, in 1936 the compulsory divisional system with its more efficient methods of taxation and administration replaced the need for the secondary consolidated school type of organization. By 1946 all Rural High Schools had been included in divisions.



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## CHAPTER I

### DEFINITION AND PURPOSES

On April 19, 1921, the Legislature assented to the Secondary Consolidated School Act. This Act stated that:

Two or more adjoining school districts of any kind may consolidate ... by the formation of a new district for the purpose of establishing and maintaining therein a school or schools for the education of pupils who have completed Grade VII or Grade VIII of the Public School Course as classified by the regulations of the Department of Education, and a district so formed shall be known as a secondary consolidated school district.<sup>1</sup>

Subsequently the Secondary Consolidated School became commonly known as the Rural High School.<sup>2</sup>

Although there was a definite need for rural educational facilities on the secondary level during the period after World War I, no widespread movement took place to remedy this situation. The Secondary Consolidated School Act of 1921 offered considerable financial assistance for high school work, however only nineteen such districts were ever formed.

The purpose of this study was to ascertain (1) the influences behind the establishment of the Rural High

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<sup>1</sup>Statutes of Alberta, 1921, p. 233. For a full text of the Act see APPENDIX A.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 1922, p. 249.





School, (2) the reasons for the general lack of implementation of the plan, (3) the degree of success of the districts formed, (4) the reason for their discontinuation, and (5) the effect, if any, on those who advocated school divisions.



## CHAPTER II

### SOURCES AND METHODS OF GAINING INFORMATION

Although the Rural High School existed within comparatively recent times, a great deal of primary source material is no longer available. Most of the files at the Department of Education have been lost or destroyed, and the same is true at many school division offices. Minute books from the two Rural High Schools of Splan and Spruce Grove provided an incentive to continue the study.

During the year 1955 letters were sent to superintendents or divisional secretaries in the districts under study explaining the project and asking for their assistance. In some cases minute books and similar records were located, and for the two Rural High Schools of Kathryn and Rockyford an extensive set of files was obtained. In addition, a number of significant Department of Education pamphlets was discovered. One pamphlet dealt solely with the Rural High School movement. Some people who had been leaders in their areas provided information by means of interviews or questionnaires, and these personal accounts of the movement gave more meaning to the study. APPENDIX B contains a copy of the questionnaire.

Teachers and pupils of former Rural High School districts were often helpful in locating informed persons.



When modern day divisional authorities were mystified by the knowledge of the existence at one time of a Rural High School at Angle Lake, a teacher in that locality gave information that led to an interview with the former secretary-treasurer, now a resident of Edmonton. Where other means failed, exploratory trips into the districts of the old school sites were necessary. This method was particularly fruitful in the case of Bow Slope School. For a summary of the information gathered see TABLE I.

TABLE I

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT  
RURAL HIGH SCHOOLS

Source	No.
Former secretary-treasurers (questionnaire) . . . . .	8
Former trustees and others (questionnaire) . . . . .	22
Interviews . . . . .	4
Minute books . . . . .	7
Sets of files . . . . .	2
School and other records . . . . .	1

Perhaps the best supplement to the source material noted above was the information contained in the Annual Report Of The Department Of Education. These reports contained an accurate statistical account of the Rural High School and also statements from various government officials explaining the general reactions of the rural population to





the high school plan. The Goresky thesis<sup>3</sup> was valuable for background material, while newspaper clippings and the Statutes Of Alberta for 1921 supplied information concerning the formation of the Rural High School. The various changes in organization and administration through the years were traced in the School Act and its supplementary acts.

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<sup>3</sup>1. Goresky, The Beginning And Growth Of The Alberta School System.



## CHAPTER III

### RURAL EDUCATION BEFORE THE RURAL HIGH SCHOOL

The system of education in western Canada was largely borrowed from Ontario. Rural school districts were limited in area by the walking ability of younger children. Most school districts in Alberta serviced an area of approximately sixteen square miles. With the multiplicity of school districts, teachers were not always plentiful, and many of the teachers in the rural areas had only minimum teaching qualifications. High schools were located mainly in the larger towns and cities. As long as young people could be absorbed by their rural communities and felt no pressing need for an education, there was little demand for secondary schools. The period after World War I began a new era in industrialization and social thinking which left its mark on rural society.

#### Organization Of Schools

Previous to 1918, few rural schools offered instruction above grade VIII. Villages and towns usually taught some high school, and sometimes these school districts would be enlarged by consolidation. Consolidated schools, which included all grades, had been in existence since 1913.



The increased benefits of centralization were offset somewhat by the regulation which stated that pupils must be provided with transportation. Transportation costs took a large share of the tax dollar and officials helping to form consolidated districts were instructed to warn districts of increased costs.<sup>4</sup> As a result consolidation was not immediately popular, for grants were not large enough to be encouraging. However, the prosperous war years revived interest, and by 1918 consolidation had reached its peak in southern Alberta.<sup>5</sup> In central and northern Alberta the severe winters and inadequate roads were deterrents to consolidation.

The more populated rural areas, particularly east of Edmonton, took advantage of extra grants by establishing two-room rural schools. The generous grant for the two-room schools was to attract better teachers, particularly for the upper room. The division of grades was of great advantage to rural students wishing some instruction on the secondary level.<sup>6</sup> The Minister of Education reported in 1921 that "in the last two years there had been an additional fifty-two of these two-room rural schools established and

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 112-113.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid. p. 121.





all but two of them were in successful operation."<sup>7</sup>

### Events Leading To The Secondary Consolidated School Act

Although many rural students took advantage of consolidation and the two-room elementary schools, a large part of rural Alberta was left without high school facilities. To alleviate some of the costs of sending pupils away to school, the Government in 1919 increased grants to high schools, but abolished the school districts' rights to charge fees to students from outside districts.<sup>8</sup> However, as yet there was no real solution to the problem. Deputy Minister John Ross reported to the Minister that "more and more farmers are agitating for a rural high school in order that their children might secure secondary education within reach of their homes."<sup>9</sup>

As early as 1920 the Minister of Education reported to the Lieutenant-Governor: "Plans are now complete for providing for rural high schools, or 'secondary consolidations' as they will be called, and this policy is being received with enthusiastic approval."<sup>10</sup> Educational

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<sup>7</sup>Report of Honourable G.P. Smith's speech in the Legislature, Edmonton Journal, March 17, 1921.

<sup>8</sup>Statutes Of Alberta, 1919, p. 213.

<sup>9</sup>G.P. Smith, Speech in Legislature, Edmonton Bulletin, March 18, 1921.

<sup>10</sup>G.P. Smith, Report to Robert G. Brett, Annual Report Of The Department Of Education, Alberta, 1921, p. 2.



literature published at that time did not reveal the origin of the Rural High School plan, but certainly no similar plan had been implemented on the prairies.<sup>11</sup> It seems probable that Alberta educators simply tried to preserve the advantages of a consolidated school while avoiding the criticisms of consolidation. The Rural High School provided no transportation because, under consolidation of elementary grades "the cost of conveyance increased taxation from double to treble sometimes of the ordinary district."<sup>12</sup> High school students were thought to be old enough to provide their own means of travel. Furthermore, the expense of sending children away to school would not exist, and more important, pupils would remain under parental guidance during their rather unstable adolescent years. Some of the members of the Legislature foresaw the need of boarding places or dormitories in larger Rural High School districts, but no general criticism was made of the plan.<sup>13</sup> There was undoubtedly a feeling of skepticism in the Calgary Albertan's report

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<sup>11</sup>Letter from the Department of Education, Manitoba, March 2, 1955.

Letter from the Department of Education, Saskatchewan, March 10, 1955.

<sup>12</sup>G.P. Smith, op. cit., Edmonton Journal, March 17, 1921.

<sup>13</sup>Reports of debate in the Legislature, Edmonton Journal, March 21, 1921.



that "the department is attempting to carry the high school to the country. That is a good move if it can be done."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Comment on recent Government legislation, Calgary Albertan, April 23, 1921.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE ESTABLISHMENT OF RURAL HIGH SCHOOLS

The Rural High School seemed to provide an answer to problems of rural secondary education. The scheme had shortcomings, but seldom were they vital to the success of the plan. The Rural High School plan was rejected by the taxpayer even though the expense would not be great, and generous grants were forthcoming.

#### Obstacles To Formation Of Districts

Any new scheme may expect opposition. Sometimes Department of Education officials were charged with being too conservative and not encouraging the formation of Rural High Schools. Certainly there seemed to be good reason to discourage sparsely settled districts and those with geographical handicaps. In many cases, children would have had to travel long distances or find accommodation near the school. However, Naco and Bow Slope were reasonably successful districts in spite of being sparsely settled areas and prone to drifting snow during the winter.

Some parents who sent their children to city or town schools opposed the establishment of a local high school. But the main opposition stemmed from fear of increased taxation. Taxpayers, particularly those without children,





opposed paying for high school facilities from public funds.

The high school inspectors' report of 1922 stated:

In some centres the provision of free education beyond Grade VIII is being seriously questioned, and the claim is made that the State and the rate-payers in general have done their duty when they have provided free educational facilities to the end of the so-called Public School Course.<sup>15</sup>

A "fear" campaign started by the opponents of the Rural High School was not uncommon. The following excerpt from a letter to the Deputy Minister of Education from the secretary of the Kathryn School indicates the methods used.

A petition ... signed by quite a number of resident ratepayers and others in the Dalroy District was forwarded to your department shortly after the vote was taken, charging certain irregularities in connection with the conducting of the poll. The Officers in charge of the meeting have already taken an affidavit as to the regularity of the poll, and again wish to state that all matters pertaining to the advertising of the meetings, the taking of the vote, was done in strict accordance with instructions from your Department and the School Act.

The main reason that the above referred to petition was so largely signed even by some ratepayers who had voted in favor of the formation of the High School District, was because the parties responsible for the petition said they had proof that if the district was formed, the tax would be at the lowest \$30.00 per quarter section; also that the District had to purchase a \$2000 laboratory equipment before they could obtain the Government Grant. ... The statements they have made when getting signatures to their petition

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<sup>15</sup>J.A. Smith - G.A. McKee, Report to the Minister, Annual Report Of The Department Of Education, Alberta, 1922, p. 16.



are absolutely absurd.<sup>16</sup>

The truth of the matter was that costs generally ran to about five dollars per quarter-section, and there was no stipulation as to how much science equipment should be purchased.

However, the greatest obstacle to the Rural High School movement was unexpected. Shortly after the spring session of the Legislature in 1921, an election was held in which the Liberals were defeated and the United Farmers of Alberta became the new Government. In the second session of the Legislature within the same year, the Farmers' Government wished to give further aid to rural education, and thus passed an amendment to the Schools Grant Act offering "an additional sum of 50 cents per day to each district operating only one room if instruction is given therein in grades above the eighth by the written authority of an inspector of schools."<sup>17</sup>

This suggested a much cheaper alternative to the Rural High School. Admittedly, inspectors protested that teachers would be unable to handle satisfactorily the increased teaching load, and most rural people were

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<sup>16</sup>Letter from E. Corbett to Mr. Ross, Kathryn Rural High School files, August 6, 1927.

<sup>17</sup>Statutes Of Alberta, 1921, p. 230.



probably aware of that fact, but the cheaper product was too attractive. In 1922 the Deputy Minister of Education wrote to the Minister:

Three years ago it was a rare thing to find a one-roomed rural school where grades above the eighth were taught, while for the term ending June 30, 1922, a total of 286 one-roomed rural schools were carrying on the work successfully and receiving the special grant of fifty cents per day from the province.<sup>18</sup>

Department of Education records and letters from files indicate that through the years a large number of districts had investigated the Rural High School plan, but were frightened of the additional costs.

#### Formation Of Districts

When the Department of Education received a request for the organization of a Rural High School, an inspector of schools was appointed to meet with the board of trustees of the districts to be included in the proposed consolidation. This committee was responsible for preparing a map or plan of the proposed consolidation showing the boundaries, the residences of children of school age, the number of children from each residence, travelled roads, bridges, and any geographic obstacles to transportation. The plan, together with a detailed report, was then submitted to the Minister

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<sup>18</sup>J.T. Ross, Report to the Minister, Annual Report Of The Department Of Education, Alberta, 1922, p. 11.



of Education for approval. If the proposal was sanctioned, the ratepayers of the proposed consolidation were permitted to hold one or more meetings with a representative of the Department in attendance to answer questions. Following a successful meeting, the Minister approved the boundaries of the consolidation and called for a petition to be signed by at least twenty-five per cent of the resident ratepayers of each district requesting a Rural High School. If the petition had the necessary number of signatures, a vote was taken over the petitioning districts as a whole, except for village and town districts. Only a majority vote was required to decide the issue.

If the rural districts voted in favor of a Rural High School, a village or town school board within the proposed consolidation merely passed a resolution approving or disapproving consolidation, and gave public notice thereof. Any twenty-five resident ratepayers of a town or fifteen resident ratepayers of a village could petition that a vote be taken. Once again only a majority vote was needed to support or defeat the proposal.<sup>19</sup> APPENDIX B contains a more detailed account of the procedure followed in forming a Rural High School.

Correspondence in the files of the Rockyford Rural

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<sup>19</sup>Rural High Schools In Alberta, pp. 13-14.







High School revealed a more vivid picture of steps in consolidation. Early in 1925 letters were written to the secretaries of the Rural High Schools at Irma and Fleet asking for detailed information about the functioning of the schools there. On August 29, 1925 a statement supporting a Rural High School in Rockyford was sent to the ratepayers of the various school districts in the proposed consolidation. APPENDIX C contains the text of the statement. Meanwhile for the fall term of 1925 D.L. MacDonald came to teach in the Rockyford Public School after failing in an attempt to establish a Rural High School at Islay.<sup>20</sup> With Mr. MacDonald's previous experience and the assistance of F.G. Buchanan, Inspector of Schools and champion of the Rural High School movement, proceedings took place for the calling of a meeting of ratepayers. On September 8, 1925, the first public meeting was held with C.R. Walrod, later secretary-treasurer of the Rural High School, elected chairman. Members of the various districts expressed support of the scheme, but one speaker thought a dormitory would be needed. The meeting concluded with a resolution passed unanimously to ask the Government to circulate petitions in the area. The following excerpt from a letter of October 31, 1925, from the chairman to the Department of Education

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<sup>20</sup>D.L. MacDonald was a brother of Angus MacDonald, one time Premier of Nova Scotia.



indicates the precarious position of the scheme.

Owing to the unsettled state of the weather, the fact that only a small percentage of the threshing in this district is finished and the pessimism prevailing among the farmers because of these conditions, the committee wish to request that the meetings proposed to be held during the second week in November be postponed indefinitely. The reason for this is that the Committee considers the present time most inopportune for bringing any question which involves the possible raising of taxes before the people if we are to hope for any great measure of success.

As soon as the threshing is finished and prospects appear more favorable we shall again take the matter up with you and we trust that we may be more successful.<sup>21</sup>

Conditions in the community must have improved, for a vote in the rural areas took place January 9, 1926. The final count showed fifty-three votes for consolidation, twenty-three opposed, and three spoiled ballots. APPENDIX D is an original copy of the public notice calling for a vote in the Rockyford Rural High School District.

Sometimes the presence of separate schools within the area complicated matters, although the different districts might work together. Rockyford was limited in area by both a Catholic separate school district and a Mitterite school district.

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<sup>21</sup>Letter from C.R. Walrod to the Department of Education, Rockyford Rural High School files, October 31, 1925.



### Location Of Districts

Strangely enough, of the nineteen Rural High Schools organized only the two Rural High Schools of Angle Lake and Splan were entirely rural. The Kathryn School was situated some distance east of the village, but the village was included in the area. The plan seemed to work best when the central district in which the school was located was a more heavily populated area. Often the village or hamlet would have had to do without a high school if the surrounding districts had not cooperated. An excerpt from the minute book of the Beaverlodge Public School three years before the Rural High School was established there gives an insight into just such a situation.

After the board had decided to discontinue High School several parents from outside districts came in to see if some arrangements could not be made to carry on. So, after some canvassing and the promise of donations from parents and pupils and others interested in the school, the board decided to carry on high school for another year.<sup>22</sup>

FIGURE I shows the location of the Rural High Schools provincially. A study of these locations suggests that the schools could function successfully in almost any type of area. Some of the districts were near cities or larger towns, while others such as Naco and Bow Slope were

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<sup>22</sup>Beaverlodge Public School minute book, August 8, 1927.



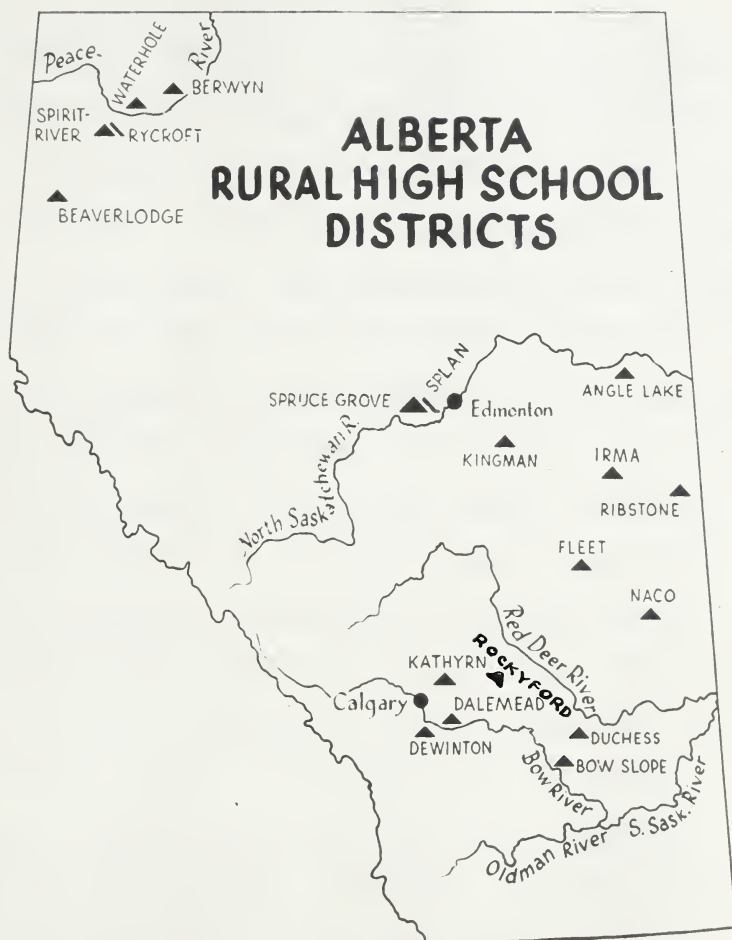


FIGURE I





relatively isolated. The only obvious conclusion that might be reached is that the Rural High Schools were no challenge either to the elementary consolidation of southern Alberta, or to the two-room schools.

TABLE II indicates the time-span over which the Rural High School districts operated, and also the number of local districts involved in each consolidation at the time of their formation. A few local school districts expressed a desire to join a Rural High School district and others wished to withdraw, but the Department seldom found these appeals warranted a change in the boundaries of the Rural High School. Fairview, however, grew from its original eight local school districts to contain eleven local school districts.

Two interesting changes of Rural High School districts' boundaries occurred at Waterhole and Spirit River. In 1929 the Northern Alberta Railroad extension to Hines Creek missed the site of Waterhole by four miles, and thus the new site of Fairview was established near the railway. All buildings at Waterhole except for an old log shack were moved to the new site within a few months. The new local district of Fairview was added to the High school district and in 1937 the name of the consolidation was changed to Fairview Rural High School. In 1938 Rycroft District broke away from Spirit River Rural High School District to form its own consolidation.



TABLE II

STATISTICS ON THE RURAL  
HIGH SCHOOL x

District number	District name	Year estab- lished	Number of local dis- tricts then established	Year dissolved
1	Irma	1921	6	1940
2	Fleet	1921	5	1939
3	Rockyford	1926	6	1945
4	Dalemead	1926	4	1939
5	Naco	1926	7	1945
6	Angle Lake	1927	2	1933
7	Kathyrn	1927	3	1939
8	Kingman	1927	4	1938
9	Waterhole (Fairview)	1927	8	1944
10	Berwyn	1928	5	1944
11	Bow Slope	1929	3	1939
12	Splan	1929	4	1939
13	Spirit River	1929	5	1945
14	Beaverlodge	1930	6	1946
15	DeWinton	1930	4	1939
16	Duchess	1930	4	1944
17	Spruce Grove	1933	5	1939
18	Ribstone	1935	3	1939
19	Rycroft	1938	4	1941

x Information from Alberta Gazettes.



## CHAPTER V

### SCHOOL FACILITIES

Few demands were made on a Rural High School at its inception. Department officials were very lenient in their definition of what were adequate buildings, furnishings, and equipment. Expenses were kept as low as possible until a community became accustomed to the advantages of secondary education and was willing to share the costs of improvement.

#### Types Of School

The temporary quarters of many Rural High Schools were greatly varied. The pioneer schools at Irma and Fleet operated for several years in makeshift rented buildings which probably prompted a high school inspector to report that "some schools should be forced out of temporary quarters."<sup>23</sup> A new school was built at Irma in 1925 and at Fleet in 1927. At Ribstone the Rural High School functioned in a building on main street until it was included in the Wainwright School Division. There was no provision for playgrounds. Other schools spent shorter periods in temporary buildings. Spruce Grove rented a church building, Angle Lake and Waterhole used community halls, Bow Slope

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<sup>23</sup>J.A. Smith, Report to the Deputy Minister, Annual Report Of The Department Of Education, 1926, p. 13.



renovated an old house, and Kathryn occupied a C.P.R. bunk-house for a short time. Only Angle Lake became discouraged by their poor accommodations. Their cooperatively built hall made of local lumber proved too cold for habitation during the winter. A tarpaulin was used to partition the big room to conserve heat, but the experiment failed. Building a new school seemed too large a project for this small consolidation of two local districts, and the whole plan was abandoned. Thus Angle Lake Rural High School operated only four months in 1927 although the district was not officially dissolved until 1933.

A number of Rural High Schools were fortunate enough to find accommodation in an extra room of a public school. Until 1923 the Government had given liberal grants to schools with an extra room for community purposes,<sup>24</sup> and in some cases the Rural High School made this room its permanent home. However, several districts built one or two-room schools in the manner specified by the Department of Education. The one-room schools were designed to allow for a future addition.

The buildings were usually one story frame structures of board, stucco, or brick exteriors with full basements. School rooms were generally large enough to accommodate thirty to forty pupils. Costs for the one-room school varied

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<sup>24</sup>I. Goresky, op. cit., p. 128.





from \$3500 to \$4500 depending on the year in which it was built. Although most of the Rural High Schools remained one-room schools, two rooms were established at Waterhole in 1932, Beaverlodge 1934, Irma 1935, and Berwyn 1936.

### Classroom Equipment

Classroom facilities at the beginning of a Rural High School's operation were often as inadequate as the school buildings. In 1925 the secretary of the Fleet School described in a letter the equipment secured at the school's inception.

This school (at Fleet) was opened in 1921 when prices were much higher than at present. The board rented a building for the school and the owner got a big heater and put some sheet zinc around it so that it heated the room quite a little like a Waterbury Heater.

They had the desks built locally at a cost of a little over \$6 each. At that time the school desks were quite expensive. Each pupil provided his own chair. I am not sure who supplied the black boards but I believe it was the owner of the building. Then I think they got about \$100. worth of laboratory supplies and hired the teacher.<sup>25</sup>

The procedure at Fleet was similar to that at other schools. A limited grant was given by the Government for library and science equipment, but the process of building adequate facilities was slow. In some areas libraries were

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<sup>25</sup>Letter from G.R. Davey to D.L. MacDonald of Rockyford, Rockyford Rural High School files, September 11, 1925.



increased in size by donations of books or money by local citizens. Although a library and science room appeared on the different Department drawings of a model Rural High School, most of the schools' facilities consisted of a cupboard for the books and science equipment, and a table for conducting science experiments. On the other hand such schools as Rockyford, Kingman, and Waterhole had special science rooms and ample equipment. The Waterhole minute book reveals purchases of a microscope, electrical supplies, and agricultural equipment for teaching courses. In later years domestic science was taught at Waterhole. Most districts had a few maps, a dictionary and sometimes a piano. As the period of operation of the school progressed, classroom equipment compared favorably with schools of similar size and grades.

#### Accommodations For Students

The size of Rural High School districts and the distances pupils had to travel varied. Pupils in a few districts had extremes of ten miles to travel, but Waterhole reported twelve miles and Beaverlodge sixteen. Most of the students who travelled long distances came from homes outside of the consolidation. The farthest average distance a student travelled to school was seven or eight miles.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Rural High Schools In Alberta, p. 19.



Students used various means of travelling to school. Some pupils walked, but the majority of them rode horses. School boards often borrowed money to build barns even though the school buildings were inadequate. At Spruce Grove, students were charged sixty cents a month per horse for space in a rented barn.<sup>27</sup> A few students travelled to school in cars, although this type of transportation was expensive. Usually parents would cooperate by taking turns providing conveyance for a group of pupils.

Many pupils who lived a considerable distance from school would stay in the village during the winter months. Some would find places to room and board, and others would rent a vacant house and cook their own meals. These rented houses often became popular gathering places for young people. At Naco several parents, who were usually wheat farmers only, coped with the transportation and parental problem by moving to the hamlet with their children. Portable "bunk-cars" and "cook-shacks" became dwellings for the winter.

Still the need for dormitories or conveyances was often expressed in reports to the Department by those people administering Rural High Schools. The cost and need for further administration were the main deterrents. Occasionally lack of accommodation would produce threats of withdrawal

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<sup>27</sup>Spruce Grove Rural High School minute book, August 1, 1935.





from fringe districts of the consolidation. The following is the body of a letter received by the Deputy Minister in 1931.

I have been instructed by our school board to ask you if there is any way possible for our district to withdraw from the Rockyford Rural High School District.

We find that because of the distance from Rockyford and the inability to procure boarding and rooming facilities in Rockyford it is very inconvenient for our High School students to attend. One student travels eleven and one-half miles, four travel ten miles and it will be necessary for other students living in the district to travel as much as twelve and one-half miles.

The roads have been open the last two years for driving, a very unusual situation - when the roads become blocked, as they usually are, it will be necessary for the children from this district to attend High Schools where there are boarding and rooming facilities.

We find it too much of a hardship on the students to drive these extreme distances and to do their work properly.<sup>28</sup>

When a copy of this letter was sent to the secretary of the Rockyford Rural High School he claimed the letter was an exaggeration of the circumstances. He stated that the furthest distance travelled at present by a student was nine and one-half miles, that no support was given to the proposal of a boarding house, that the children were

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<sup>28</sup>Letter from the secretary of Landseer School District to the Deputy Minister, Rockyford Rural High School files, March 5, 1931.





served by a main trunk road, and that the root of the grievance really concerned social events in the school. He further warned the Department that should they take the application seriously: "Our beautiful and efficient little High School will degenerate into the club house for which the Coxy's Army from Landseer is now clamoring."<sup>29</sup>

APPENDIX E contains the full text of this letter.

Dormitories, where established, were successful. At Rockyford, the Catholic convent made provision for some students from distant points, and at Rycroft the Sisters of Service provided living accommodation for "any boy or girl of school age."<sup>30</sup> But the only dormitory actually operated by a Rural High School board was at Duchess. After some difficulty, adequate accommodations were found for two dormitories, one for girls, and one for boys. Mr. Fred Betton in answer to a questionnaire wrote:

The dormitory was most satisfactory. A matron-cook was employed to live with the girls, I supervised the boys. The cash required per pupil was \$2.00 a month. All food was brought in from the home. In the E.I.D. [Eastern Irrigation District] vegetables, fruit, and meat were plentiful and almost without value.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid., Letter from C.R. Walrod to the Department of Education, March 20, 1931.

<sup>30</sup>Letter from Jim McBride, Rycroft, August 4, 1955.

<sup>31</sup>Letter from Fred Betton, Cluny, August 8, 1955. Mr. Betton helped father the plan for a Rural High School at Duchess.



At Brooks, where Bow Slope Rural High School sent their grade twelve students, the dormitory costs were seven dollars a month. Except for the usual discipline problem there were few hindrances to establishing a dormitory.

Dormitories were later established at Spirit River and Kathryn, but not until after these schools had joined divisions.



## CHAPTER VI

### THE SCHOOL BOARD, TEACHER, AND PUPIL

No historic research can be complete without some study of the problems of the people who took part in the movement. The school board had to administer a new plan, the teacher had to cope with teaching many grades, and the pupil had to prove that a Rural High School could be a worthwhile institution. A study of these three groups provides a more intimate understanding and appreciation of what was accomplished.

#### The School Board

According to regulations, within fifteen days after a Rural High School was officially formed, the board of each rural and village district was to appoint one (in the case of a town, two) of their number to represent them on the board of trustees of the secondary consolidated district. The trustee so appointed held office during his term as trustee on the school board of the local district. If only two districts were represented in the consolidation (Angle Lake was an example) the two appointed trustees would appoint an additional trustee agreeable to both parties. In practice the chairman of the local district usually became the representative on the Rural High School board.



Often the dominant figure on the board was not the chairman but the secretary-treasurer, who was appointed by his fellow trustees. The secretary-treasurer was generally chosen for his acquaintance with business procedures and his ability to express himself. Frequently he had been a leader in organizing the formation of the Rural High School, and he seldom had difficulty in being re-elected to office. As a result the secretary was almost a permanent member on many boards. His dominant position was sometimes challenged by a fellow trustee, usually without success. The secretary received a nominal sum of thirty to fifty dollars a year for his efforts.

Problems of the board consisted of everything from very important financial matters to petty details which were no less annoying. The feuds that erupted between the Rural High School board on the one hand and one or more local districts on the other were particularly disturbing. Perhaps the best example of such disputes was the quarrel between the Kathryn board and the Dalroy local board. Beginning in 1927 with the petition to withdraw from the Rural High School, differences continued. In February of 1929 a letter from the local district advised the central board that school regulations called for the maintenance of a classroom temperature of seventy degrees and that this regulation was not being followed. The suggestion was





made that there was "a tendency on the part of the management to economize on fuel, even during severe weather."<sup>32</sup> Meanwhile in the same year the Dalroy District refused to pay its tax requisition, and court procedures were taken by the Rural High School board to recover the money. The case was finally settled out of court. (Chapter VII contains more complete details.) In 1932 a resolution from the same local district asked that the board pay less salary to the teacher. In 1935 the Dalroy District demanded the right to teach grade IX in the local school, and refused to pay tuition fees for grade XII students in the Rural High School.

Although some Rural High School boards did not deal with such major community disagreements, similar problems were not uncommon. The school board often dealt with complaints about teachers and subjects taught, and they also dealt with diverse situations such as student misdemeanors, cattle dirtying the school grounds, and controversial literature in the school. J.H. Coldwell, the secretary-treasurer at Kathryn, wrote to the Department objecting to a booklet distributed to schools by a private source entitled Canada and Her Wheat Pool. Deputy Minister J.T. Ross answered:

I read the booklet and find that the whole tenor of it indicates that the writer has endeavoured to

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<sup>32</sup>Kathryn Rural High School files, February 11, 1929.



make as strong a case as possible against the Wheat Pool.

The Department of Education had no knowledge that this booklet was sent to the secretary-treasurer of each school district, and I consider that you did right in holding it, as it is not literature that should be used in any way in a school room.

I am sorry to learn that the enemies of the Wheat Pool are endeavouring in such a subtle manner to discredit the administration of the Wheat Pool in Western Canada.<sup>33</sup>

Christmas concert dates created a minor problem when the Rural High School concert date conflicted with that of a local district school. Many school districts wanted to have their concert the last school day since their school would be in no condition for classes the following day. Parents and children often attended all the concerts. The week before Christmas was a round of gala events. Controversy also arose from the restriction of the school building for pupil or adult social events during other times of the year.

### The Teacher

The teacher in the Rural High School was generally well qualified. Schools near cities had numerous applications from teachers with degrees, and most schools had teachers of lesser qualifications simply because that was

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., Letter from J.T. Ross to J.H. Coldwell, November 28, 1930.



their choice. For the period 1930 to 1937 inclusive, only two teachers with less than first class certificates taught in Rural High Schools.<sup>34</sup> Official records did not give an accurate account of teacher qualifications since many teachers with degrees simply indicated they held first class certificates. School policy in some cases was to hire only teachers with degrees.<sup>35</sup>

An analysis of the maximum qualifications of teachers applying to the Kathryn Rural High School board for the term beginning January 2, 1930 is revealing. One applicant had a second class certificate, two had first class certificates, five had Bachelor's degrees, five had Master's degrees, and one had a Doctor's degree.

The Kathryn School is situated about twenty-five miles from Calgary, and undoubtedly the beginning of the depression years influenced more people to seek jobs, preferably near the city. Nevertheless, the qualifications of the applicants are imposing. Furthermore, many of the teachers had considerable experience and a few as principals of large schools. A closer scrutiny of the applications reveals some interesting details.

Most of the applicants included copies of inspectors'

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<sup>34</sup>Term Returns on file at the Department of Education, 1930-1937.

<sup>35</sup>Splan Rural High School minute book, July 29, 1932.





reports and many sent numerous testimonials. Letters of recommendation or statements of character came from former school principals, Department and university officials, prominent business men, and clergymen. One applicant included ten pages of duplicated typewritten material. Another teacher stated that his reasons for teaching were mercenary since he needed money to complete his medical doctor's degree. A lady with her Master's degree had previously spent three years lecturing at the University of Wisconsin. Other applicants had university degrees from Scotland and England. Many teachers assured the board of their good moral character, as did the applicant who stated:

I am a married man of strictly temperate and moral habits. Use neither intoxicating liquors nor tobacco and consider the development of a strong manly or womanly Christian character in my pupils the main object of my work as a teacher.<sup>36</sup>

The teacher with the second class certificate stated, "I am an experienced qualified second class teacher."<sup>37</sup> A young lady with a Bachelor's degree obtained the position.

The school board's choice of teacher was not always the wisest choice. Those boards paying the lowest salaries seemed to have more difficulties, presumably because their teachers were not so well qualified academically and they lacked teaching experience. However, in some cases the

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<sup>36</sup>Kathryn Rural High School files, November 29, 1929.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., December 21, 1929.





teachers with degrees were the least successful. A teacher specialized in a few fields often had difficulty teaching a variety of courses. Some boards were willing to tolerate incompetent teaching if the teacher would take a reduction in salary. See TABLE III for the salaries paid in Rural High Schools in 1936. (See also TABLE V in Chapter VII for variations of salaries paid at Irma from year to year.)

Teachers were also required to teach a number of grades. Although the teacher in a one-room school could not satisfactorily teach grade XII, where there was a low attendance or a great demand for the grade it was often taught. Teachers could not normally find time for all the grades, and as a result some grade XII subjects were taught before the regular school time or after school. Several schools paid their teachers extra for this burden, but others did not. The high school inspector had the right to forbid the teaching of grade XII; but when the teacher was willing, consent was usually given. Two-room schools taught the complete grade XII course.

Dissatisfaction with the teacher stemmed from such causes as lack of discipline in the classroom, poor showing of pupils on examinations, and inability to teach certain subjects. One ratepayer wished to change teachers because the present one could not teach German.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Splan Rural High School minute book, June 27, 1934.



TABLE III

STATISTICS FROM TERM RETURNS  
1936

Rural high school	Teacher's annual salary	Pupils' average attendance	Grades represented
Irma - Room 1 . . . .	\$ 900 . .	24.51 . . .	IX, X
- Room 2 . . . .	1,200 . .	20.33 . . .	XI, XII
Fleet . . . . .	1,000 . .	18.16 . . .	IX, X, XI, XII
Rockyford . . . . .	1,500 . .	20.08 . . .	X, XI, XII
Dalemead . . . . .	1,200 . .	11.36 . . .	IX, X, XI, XII
Naco . . . . .	900 . .	18.12 . . .	IX, X, XI, XII
Kathyrn . . . . .	1,000 . .	11.1 . . .	IX, X, XI, XII
Kingman . . . . .	1,100 . .	20.39 . . .	IX, X, XI
Waterhole - Room 1 . .	950 . .	33.72 . . .	IX, X
- Room 2 . . . .	1,050 . .	28.71 . . .	XI, XII
Berwyn . . . . .	1,350 . .	31.79 . . .	IX, X, XI
Bow Slope . . . . .	900 . .	10.48 . . .	IX, X, XI, XII
Splan . . . . .	1,000 . .	20.55 . . .	IX, X, XI
Spirit River . . . .	1,400 . .	23.83 . . .	IX, X, XI
Beaverlodge - Room 1 . .	850 . .	21.4 . . .	IX, XI
- Room 2 . . . .	1,200 . .	24.88 . . .	X, XII
DeWinton . . . . .	1,000 . .	16.19 . . .	IX, X, XI
Duchess . . . . .	1,100 . .	25.86 . . .	IX, X, XI
Spruce Grove . . . .	1,000 . .	19.8 . . .	IX, X, XI
Ribstone . . . . .	925 . .	14.87 . . .	VIII, IX, X, XI, XII



Some ratepayers complained that there was too much homework for their children, while others complained that there was not enough. In either case the child's final result from examinations was expected to be good. Many teachers expected children to do at least two hours of homework per day.

Teaching in a Rural High School was not always short-term employment. Several teachers gave many years of excellent service. A number of these teachers are prominent in educational circles today.

### The Pupil

The pupil of the Rural High School was perhaps a bit more conscientious than his urban counterpart, but the ways of youth were common to both. Misdemeanors dealt with by the rural board consisted of such things as destruction of school property, ungentlemanly behavior in the classroom, creating explosions in the laboratory, and writing uncomplimentary remarks about the teacher on the walls of the girls' lavatory. Suggestions were sometimes made that the village should have curfew laws to keep the student at home at night. In 1935 many boards threatened to take action on the Government proposal to charge fees to students spending more time than was necessary to complete high school.<sup>39</sup> The reason for this

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<sup>39</sup>The School Act, Alberta, 1935.



action was that students with no academic ambition were remaining in school because they could not find employment. Some students were expelled from school.

Nevertheless, many students appreciated their educational opportunities. This was particularly true of students from outside districts whose parents paid fees to the Rural High School. Rockyford had pupils from such distant points as Michichi, Rumsey, New Norway, Hesketh, and Caroline.<sup>40</sup> If grade XII was not offered in a school, the Rural High School board usually paid fees for correspondence courses.<sup>41</sup> The same was true for students going to technical school.

The Department's policy of limiting examination centres forced many Rural High School grade XII students to travel considerable distances. When June rains made roads impassable and students were unable to write the examinations, the Department came under a scathing attack from both school board and pupils.

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<sup>40</sup>Rockyford Rural High School files.

<sup>41</sup>Correspondence courses were introduced in Alberta in 1924.





## CHAPTER VII

### FINANCING THE RURAL HIGH SCHOOL

Financially, the Rural High School board was confronted with many problems. The mill rate had to be kept as low as possible, taxes and fees had to be collected, and finances had to be administered in an efficient manner. Sometimes stern measures had to be taken.

#### Local Taxation

An amendment to the School Assessment Ordinance in 1921 outlined the procedure to be used in a Rural High School district for collection of taxes. APPENDIX F contains a copy of the Ordinance.

The Rural High School board budgeted for the year and then requisitioned each local school district according to its assessment. Rural tax was levied on land valuation, while town or village tax was levied on both real and personal property. The assessed value of land in the rural districts was accepted as the same as that for purposes of the Supplementary Revenue Tax, but the town or village district which was part of the consolidation had its property assessed by the Rural High School board. The board's assessment was subject to appeal.

The exact procedures outlined by the School Assess-



ment Ordinance were not always followed. A number of districts operated for the first few months on a flat rate system that in the rural areas was usually based on acreage. For many years Rockyford continued to use the acreage system of taxation in the rural areas and the assessment system in the village. Naco, which included seven school districts, gave a reduced rate to areas outside a ten mile radius of the school. There was considerable agitation in many consolidations for taxes to be based on the number of children attending school from each district. One correspondent in speaking of the assessment principle wrote: "This method of distribution caused more dissatisfaction than any other matter. Rural districts preferred distribution per capita of attendance."<sup>42</sup> However, a per capita system of taxation was never implemented.

In most districts the tax levy was seldom more than two mills, although in lower assessment areas such as Naco and Bow Slope the tax went as high as four mills. Of course, the more districts included in the Rural High School the lower the tax rate was likely to be. The large consolidation of Waterhole seldom had a tax rate much more than one mill and never more than two. During the depression, operation costs were cut to a minimum. In 1933 the mill

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<sup>42</sup>Letter from Fred Betton, op. cit.



rate at Splan dropped to seven-tenths of a mill, and in 1934 the mill rate at Kingman dropped to three-quarters of a mill. TABLE IV shows the assessed valuation of land and the mill rate for Rural High Schools in 1929.

Collecting taxes was sometimes difficult. The dispute, previously mentioned, between the Kathryn Rural High School District and the Dalroy District spread into the taxation field. When the Dalroy District refused to pay its 1928 requisition, the Kathryn District took legal action to recover the money. The secretary of the Rural High School sent a letter of inquiry to the Department of Education and received the following answer:

I am in receipt of your letter of the 26th ultimo in which you state that the law firm you have consulted suggested that they interview the Department of Education with regard to the procedure they should take to collect the amount of the requisition made by the Kathryn Rural High School from the Dalroy School District. I cannot understand why the legal firm should delay in taking action against the Dalroy Board, as the amount of the requisition should be collected without delay.

The members of the Board of Trustees of the Dalroy School District sent their resignations to this Department, and were advised that as they were elected by the ratepayers of the Dalroy School District, they should send their resignations to the Secretary with instructions for him to call a meeting of the ratepayers for the purpose of either accepting their resignations and electing a new Board, or deciding not to accept the resignations. If the ratepayers decide to elect no trustees it is very probable that they will request the Department of Education to appoint an Official Trustee for the District, but in the meantime the local board is responsible for the administration of the affairs



TABLE IV

VALUATION OF LAND AND ASSESSMENT  
FOR RURAL HIGH SCHOOLS -- 1929<sup>x</sup>

Name of district	Total assessed valuation	Mill rate
Irma . . . . .	\$1,009,620.00 . .	2 5/8
Fleet . . . . .	\$ 675,947.70 . .	2 1/2
Rockyford . . . . .	Operating on an acreage basis . .	\$5.25 per quarter section plus 20% additional assessment for debenture payment
Dalemead . . . . .	\$1,009,630.30 . .	2
Naco . . . . .	\$ 698,573.00 . .	3 1/2
Angle Lake	(Not operating)	
Kathyrn . . . . .	\$ 826,552.00 . .	2
Kingman . . . . .	\$ 573,730.00 . .	2
Waterhole (Fairview)	\$1,057,860.00 . .	1 1/2
Berwyn . . . . .	\$ 134,568.00 . .	1 1/2
Bow Slope . . . . .	\$ 184,822.00 . .	4
Splan . . . . .	\$ 995,940.00 . .	1
Spirit River . . .	\$1,000,000.00 . .	1
Beaverlodge . . .	\$ 607,327.00 . .	2
DeWinton . . . . .	\$ 762,132.00 . .	2

<sup>x</sup> All figures are taken from Rural High Schools in Alberta, pp. 17-18.





of the Dalroy School District, and will be responsible until either their successors are appointed or they have requested the Minister to appoint an Official Trustee.<sup>43</sup>

Subsequently the legal firm had a Statement of Claim served on the Dalroy District's secretary-treasurer. Realizing the vulnerability of its position, the Dalroy board settled the case out of court.

Previous to 1931 the local school districts collected their own taxes and the School Assessment Act read:

It shall be the duty of the boards of each of said districts to pay to the board of the secondary consolidated school district on demand the amounts required from time to time for school purposes.<sup>44</sup>

However, in 1931 the municipal district council was given the authority to collect school taxes in its rural area.<sup>45</sup> The shortcomings of this new legislation in reference to the Rural High School was voiced in the following letter:

At the time this district was formed, provision was made in the Act for payment of requisitions against the districts comprising the consolidation On Demand. Now, there is apparently no provision made which enables a Rural High S.D. to collect its accounts against the individual districts of which it is composed.

Sub-section (3) of Section (47) of the School Assessment Act of 1931 says in part, ....', and the board of each of such districts shall cause

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<sup>43</sup>Letter from J.T. Ross, Deputy Minister of Education, to Messrs. Ford, Miller, and Harvie, Kathryn Rural High School files, January 4, 1929.

<sup>44</sup>Statutes Of Alberta, 1921, p. 229.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 1931, p. 319.



such amount to be raised by taxation on the assessable property in the district in the same manner as other school taxes.'

This gives the local districts power to collect our taxes for us but gives us no power to collect our taxes from the local districts. Our experience indicates that when, as occurs in some instances, a local district has difficulty in collecting from a municipality, it is inclined to follow the line of least resistance and rather than insist on full payments by the municipality, they continue to operate their own local schools on our money. This, of course, hampers our plans and we wish to know what avenue of recourse is open to us.<sup>46</sup>

After further correspondence Deputy Minister J.T.

Ross proposed the following change in the Act:

The board of trustees of each district within a rural high school district shall pay to the board of trustees of the rural high school district the amount requisitioned pursuant to the provisions of subsection (3) hereof in quarterly instalments payable on the last day of each of the months of March, June, September, and December, and the amount of any instalment if not paid when due shall become a debt due, owing and payable by the board of trustees of the high school district, which may be recovered by suit at law, if permission to enter such suit is granted by the Minister.<sup>47</sup>

Mr. Walrod expressed dissatisfaction with the amendment because the municipal district did not pay the requisition directly to the Rural High School district, and thus the local district could still divert the use of the funds

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<sup>46</sup>Letter from C.R. Walrod to the Department of Education, Rockford Rural High School files, October 25, 1933.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., Letter from J.T. Ross to C.R. Walrod, November 8, 1933.



if it so desired. The discussion was finally brought to a close with the following letter:

I regret to report that the Minister was not favorably impressed with our proposal to modify the Act in such a way as to safeguard payments to the Rural High School Board. I think he felt that anything of the sort would tend to complicate matters and might have only an effect of drawing attention specifically, in some districts, to the fact that much needed revenues for local purposes were being devoted to the Rural High School. He was of the opinion also that the situation is, more or less, due to the prevailing disturbed conditions and that it would all have a tendency to right itself as soon as there is a general improvement.<sup>48</sup>

Upon further investigation the Rockyford secretary-treasurer discovered that the local school district was divided between municipalities. The one municipality had paid the requisition while the other had not. Therefore, what funds were available were being used to maintain the local school. Action thus had to be taken against the municipality.

The tax collecting problem at Rockyford was not just peculiar to that district. Mr. G.R. Davey of Fleet reported that "the debenture debt weighed heavily during the thirties. Some of the member school districts would not demand enough money from the municipalities and some of the municipalities did not have the money."<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>Ibid., Letter from Mr. Gorman to C.R. Walrod, January 25, 1934.

<sup>49</sup>Letter from G.R. Davey, Fleet, May 26, 1955.





### Government Grants

Government grants to the Rural High School were generous. An amendment to the School Grants Act in 1921 stated that a grant of four dollars per day would be given for each day the high school room operated provided the school maintained an average attendance of fifteen pupils. Non-resident children who applied for entrance were to be admitted without fee. The four dollar per day grant remained the same until 1936, in spite of the tendency from 1920 until 1935 for reduction in grants.<sup>50</sup> In 1933, as a result of the depression, grants were paid for not more than 180 days, instead of the usual two hundred days, and in 1936 the figure of two hundred days was restored but the grant per day was reduced to three dollars and sixty cents. The requirement for an average attendance of fifteen pupils was maintained throughout the period of the Rural High School. In practice, when the average enrollment dropped below fifteen, a partial grant was paid through an order-in-council. The grant per day was in the same ratio to four dollars that the average attendance for the school term was to fifteen.<sup>51</sup> In addition, the Government paid a grant for science equipment and library facilities. The science

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<sup>50</sup>I. Goresky, op. cit., p. 130.

<sup>51</sup>Kathryn Rural High School files.





equipment grant remained for many years at fifty per cent of the board's expenditures on such equipment to a maximum of one hundred dollars. The library grant was limited in 1923 to the first six years after the organization of the school, and the paying of the grant was based on an inspector's recommendation.

The Rural High School with small attendance often did a great deal of manipulating to keep its grant as large as possible. TABLE III indicates this relationship between the low average attendance of Dalemead, Kathyrn, Bow Slope, and Ribstone, and the large number of grades taught in each school. The Rural High School with a low attendance frequently complained when an inspector would permit a local school district in the consolidation to teach grades VIII or IX. On the other hand, the fringe districts wished to save the younger children from having to travel a considerable distance.

#### Tuition Fees

In 1919 the Government abolished the payment of fees for non-resident pupils in grades above the eighth, and in return gave high schools a special grant of one dollar and fifty-cents per day.<sup>52</sup> School boards accepted the grant, but chose to ignore the relationship it bore to non-payment

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<sup>52</sup>Statutes Of Alberta, 1919, p. 213.



of fees. Therefore, in 1922, as a result of agitation from trustees, the Government gave permission to school boards to charge a three dollar a month fee for students in grades IX, X, and XI, and a four dollar a month fee for students in grade XII. The school board was responsible for pupil's fees in grades below XI, and parents or pupils were responsible for fees in grade XII. A school board did not have to take responsibility for payment of fees if a student could have received the same grade of instruction in his home district.

The Department now received complaints from two sources. The Rural High School boards still maintained that non-resident pupils were not bearing their share of school costs, and inspectors reported that many children were not going to high school because parents could not afford to pay fees. The following excerpt of a letter from a parent of a non-resident pupil to the secretary of a Rural High School, supports the latter group's contention.

In reply to your statement of tuition due. I hardly know what to write you in regard to this. Due to the summer frost and dry weather, I only had 120 bu. of wheat last year and practically no feed and we have sold off to keep going until now there is nothing more to sell. I will not be able to do my summer fallowing until I collect for some road work that I will begin this week. Mrs. C. has put in most of the crop this spring while I worked at W. & B. but a dollar a day doesn't buy necessities for a family.

I want to do the right thing by the H.S. district as we are mindful and appreciative of the benefits



to the girls, but I cannot see how I can raise any cash at present. I would like to hear from you again. I may be down this week, but I try to avoid losing any time.<sup>53</sup>

As in the case cited, some parents could not afford to pay fees, and a number of school boards did not bother trying to collect these debts. In a few instances the parents hauled wood to the school or clipped the hedges in payment of fees. Nevertheless, there were parents who the board felt could pay the charges, but would not. Sometimes the board would retaliate by using such methods as demanding that pupils pay fees monthly, visiting the parents personally, and threatening to use the legal powers of collection permitted in the School Act. Results were still not satisfactory.

Other tuition problems arose when no school district would accept responsibility for the children of transient workers, or a pupil would enroll in the Rural High School when he could have been instructed in the same grade in his home school district. However, a more common problem was the apportioning of responsibility for payment of fees when a student was taking courses in both grade XI and XII. No official ruling was given in the School Act, but in 1934

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<sup>53</sup>Kathyrn Rural High School files, June 24, 1935.



the Department stated:

The ruling has been that the district furnishing the instruction is entitled to receive a fee of \$4.00 per month, payable with regard to the Grade XI subjects by the home district of the pupil, at the rate of 40¢ per subject per month, and the balance is payable by the parent or pupil.<sup>54</sup>

For a student who was taking fewer than ten subjects the parent received the larger share of the cost.

In 1935 an amendment to the School Act gave the Chief Inspector the power to fix the amounts chargeable to the parent when students were taking courses in both grades. The new scale provided for a fee of ten dollars for the first unit in grade XII, and five dollars for all subsequent units in either grade XI or grade XII. The maximum charge for fees was forty dollars.<sup>55</sup>

Not all Rural High Schools accepted the principle that grade XII was their responsibility. Some boards attempted to collect tuition fees from resident pupils enrolled in this higher grade. However, legally any payment on the part of the parent was purely voluntary. One irate taxpayer who objected to this extra fee for grade XII wrote:

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<sup>54</sup>Letter from I.H. Mann to J.H. Coldwell, Kathryn Rural Rural High School files, December 19, 1934.

<sup>55</sup>The School Act for 1936 contains a table of fees for non-resident pupils partially in grade XI and partially in grade XII.







Finally, on principle I may say, and to prevent this charging of fees to resident pupils, in order to extract illegal levies from such, from becoming a precedent, I hereby strongly object to this practice. I would refuse to pay such a levy and would recommend all others to do likewise -- and this, even though the Minister of Education ruled otherwise. It is simply a legal question and would have to be decided by a court. If the board are in need of more funds as a corporate body, it can raise more money on the mill rate -- but not by private and illegal action contrary to the school act.<sup>56</sup>

### Cost Of Operation

The estimated cost of operating a Rural High School in 1929 was, on the average, twenty-four hundred dollars. If the school was open for two hundred days and maintained a minimum attendance of fifteen, the grant was eight hundred dollars. The other sixteen hundred dollars came from taxation. The average annual tax in the rural areas was five dollars a quarter section, or expressed as a mill rate the tax was from one to three mills on the dollar.<sup>57</sup>

The greatest single expense was the teacher's salary which was usually more than one-half of the total cost. Where a great deal of money was spent on school buildings and equipment, the debenture debt was also a large item. The low mill rate of Splan and Kingman, cited earlier, was

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<sup>56</sup>Letter from T. Davis to J.H. Coldwell, Kathryn Rural High School files, December 4, 1935.

<sup>57</sup>Rural High Schools In Alberta, p. 12.



largely due to the fact that these two schools rented classrooms. During the depression when funds were lacking, the debenture debt was the last to be paid. Other items of expense were for such things as caretaking and fuel, school equipment, and insurance. TABLE V is a financial summary of the Irma Rural High School District for a ten year period which includes the depression years.

There was no other type school that operated in the same manner as the Rural High School. The nearest similar types of schools were the consolidated school and the village school. However, in both cases these schools included children who were also receiving instruction in elementary grades. The cost of educating children in the lower grades was not as great as in high school, mainly because the teachers of the lower grades received less salary and usually had larger classes. Also, the town and village schools would likely have more pupils per room which would decrease the cost per pupil. Nevertheless, bearing these facts in mind, TABLE VI is some indication of comparative costs of high school education.



TABLE V

FINANCIAL SUMMARY OF  
THE IRMA RURAL HIGH SCHOOL  
1925 -- 1935 x

Year	Assessed valuation	Mill rate	Debt incurred	Salary paid teacher	Exact cost of operation	Govern- ment grant	Finance from tuition fees
1925	\$ 978,248	2 1/8	\$5,250	\$1,800	\$3,910.06	\$804.00	\$ 48.00
1926	1,083,124	2 1/8	6,656.22	1,800	3,257.69	792.00	105.00
1927	964,095	2 1/4	5,857.29	1,840	3,322.29	804.00	120.00
1928	968,455	2 1/8	5,091.96	1,940	3,278.80	802.00	24.00
1929	1,007,320	2 5/8	4,360.63	2,000	3,366.72	786.00	123.02
1930	1,009,620	2 3/8	3,663.30	2,000	3,544.83	796.00	90.00
1931	1,015,350	2 1/8	2,999.97	1,920	3,131.69	810.00	216.00
1932	898,575	1 3/4	1,922.64	1,920	3,055.00	833.32	120.00
1933	898,135	1 1/8	1,633.00	1,526	2,468.00	816.25	105.00
1934	897,930	1 1/4	1,791.00	1,266	2,023.45	745.54	248.00
1935	891,461	1 1/4	1,475.00	1,158	1,882.82	708.00	66.00

x The above information is from the Annual Financial Statement and Auditor's Report.



TABLE VI

COMPARATIVE COST PER PUPIL  
 ACCORDING TO AVERAGE ATTENDANCE <sup>x</sup>

School year	Town and village schools	Consolidated schools	Rural High Schools
1934-35 . .	\$58.25 . . . . .	\$84.92 . . .	\$87.79
1935-36 . .	60.08 . . . . .	86.57 . . .	81.14
1936-37 . .	60.58 . . . . .	91.57 . . .	86.12
1937-38 . .	62.25 . . . . .	88.84 . . .	82.67

<sup>x</sup> The above information is from the Comparative Cost Tables of the Annual Report Of The Department Of Education for the years indicated.





## CHAPTER VIII

### THE DISCONTINUATION OF THE RURAL HIGH SCHOOL

Only one Rural High School, Angle Lake, discontinued operations for reasons other than the coming of the school division. Proponents of the Rural High School often voiced strong opposition to the division, as well as did most rural trustees, but the movement could not be halted.

#### Background Of The Division

Department officials were perturbed by the lack of response to the Rural High School plan since previous to 1926 only the two schools at Irma and Fleet had been formed. Furthermore, these two schools had financial and administrative limitations. G.W. Gorman, Chief Inspector of Schools, in 1926 proposed that:

The high school problem might be met at once by organizing the rural municipalities into High School areas, and charging each municipality with the responsibility for high school instruction for the pupils of all resident parents. This could be financed with a municipal rate, supported by provincial assistance, and the administration might be in the hands of a municipal board or committee of all the school boards of the several districts in the municipality.<sup>58</sup>

In the following years, Mr. Gorman continued to express concern about the number of rural children who were being

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<sup>58</sup>G.W. Gorman, Report to the Deputy Minister, Annual Report Of The Department Of Education, Alberta, 1926, p. 41.



deprived of an opportunity for an education, and he became a strong advocate of the large unit of administration to include all grades.

Mr. Gorman was not alone in his efforts. The Minister of Education, Perren Baker, as early as 1925 had proposed to the Legislature a provincial wide levy of three mills in aid of school districts in weak financial condition. Although this bill was rejected, the Minister continued his campaign. In 1928, he was again unsuccessful when he introduced a bill calling for rural areas to be divided into twenty divisions with a provincial wide mill rate.<sup>59</sup> Still undaunted, Perren Baker published a pamphlet in 1929 which outlined the method whereby large divisions would solve many of the unsatisfactory conditions in education. In reference to the Rural High School, he stated that they "meet the need fairly well in the localities where such consolidations have been formed. But, being a voluntary association, it is difficult to effect."<sup>60</sup> In 1930 a new bill before the Legislature provided for the large units of administration, but no mention was made of a provincial wide tax and a vote of the rate-payers was permitted. Once again the bill was rejected.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>I. Goresky, op. cit., pp. 144-145.

<sup>60</sup>Perren Baker, Rural Education In Alberta, p. 4.

<sup>61</sup>I. Goresky, op. cit., p. 146.



The opposition to the Honourable Perren Baker's plan for education also came from the taxpayers. In 1929 the Rockyford taxpayers after discussing the pamphlet Rural Education In Alberta submitted a brief to the Legislative Assembly. Speaking of secondary education, the brief maintained that:

So far as secondary education is concerned, considerable benefit could be derived if more general advantage were to be taken of our Rural High School scheme which is very creditably supplying a long felt need and which is not burdensome on the taxpayer. In this connection, we would respectfully suggest that an effort be made to simplify the erection of these districts as our present system is most unwieldy and cumbersome. It requires an endless amount of determination and perseverance to put the idea into operation and it is possible that communities with the best of intentions would become frightened or discouraged at the multitude of obstacles placed before them which have no apparent value.

In reference to the proposed provincial levy which would make the rate of taxation more uniform, the brief agreed that:

We are also in favor of any scheme that will 'effect a fair distribution of the cost' but in arriving at what the Hon. Mr. Baker considers a fair distribution it might be well to investigate the possibilities involved. The Hon. Mr. Baker is apparently shocked by the startling realization that school districts vary in assessed valuation from \$5,000.00 to \$400,000.00 and that while the tax in a given year falls as low as 3 mills in some districts it rises to 80 mills in others. 80 mills on a \$5,000.00 assessment would bring in only \$400.00. Just what could anyone expect of a district of this size, and who is to blame for such an appalling condition? Surely not the legitimate and well intentioned settler who has taken up land in some other part of the province. If a settler chooses





to file on a mountain top or an island in the center of a lake are the taxpayers of the province expected to educate his children? If so he has a similar right to demand a road to his place as the Act says roads must be opened to all schools. If these residents are marooned in a desert it would appear to be profitable investment for the province to move them to a more reasonable location.

Finally, in referring to the effect of increased costs if a provincial levy was imposed, the brief pointed out that:

This system has a tendency to eradicate all but the best farmers as the operation costs together with the high taxes, are too heavy a drain on the proceeds of the crops to allow for any incompetence or waste. The man who is fortunate enough to own his farm can get along but the best type of new-comer is finding the overhead expense too great and if interest and tax charges are very materially increased he will ultimately be driven off the land as no good farmer can afford to spend his life working for someone else without hope of profit for himself. This will force the valuation of the land down but would it not be much wiser to set the taxes on this land at a reasonable rate and encourage thrifty and industrious farmers to live on the land? Will the Hon. Mr. Baker or someone else tell us where they can possibly see justification in penalizing one section of the province and subsidizing another section. It is but the Irish Home Rule Bill in another guise being foisted upon the people of Alberta to the detriment of the few unjustly assessed municipalities.<sup>62</sup>

The amendment to the School Assessment Act of 1931, which made the municipality the collection agency for rural schools, was the only statutory progress towards the idea of large units that Perren Baker achieved. In 1934 a committee of the Legislative Assembly undertook a study of

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<sup>62</sup>Brief to the Alberta Legislative Assembly, Rockyford Rural High School files, February 2, 1929.





rural education, and in 1935 the report was submitted with a recommendation that some form of the large unit of administration be established.

In the summer of 1935 the Social Credit party swept into power under Mr. Aberhart who as Minister of Education put into effect the dream of his predecessor Perren Baker. Following a study of the report of the Legislative Committee on rural education, the Legislature empowered the Minister of Education to set up divisions without a vote of the rate-payers. In 1936 eleven divisions were formed.

Although the Government had passed a bill for the formation of school divisions, not all the public were willing to accept the statute. Fairview Rural High School seemed to have good reason for submitting the following resolution which stated that:

Whereas, it is the policy and the intention of the Alberta Government to establish larger administrative units, known as School Divisions, throughout the Province, and

Whereas, in the Peace River area some divisions already established, and others in the process of formation, include an organized municipality and a large area of newly settled territory in local improvement districts, whereas very little revenue is raised for the support of schools, and a great many of the residents are on relief, and whereas, many of the people in these improvement districts came to new homesteads from the drought area with the assistance of the Federal and Provincial governments, and have been kept on relief for years by these same governments, and the type of land occupied by most of these homesteaders would indicate that they will be unable to produce more than



a subsistence for many years to come, and whereas it is definitely the responsibility of the Province as a whole to provide education for these newer areas until they are self supporting.

Therefore be it resolved that we, the trustees and ratepayers of Fairview Rural High S.D. No. 9, representing ten rural and one village school districts in the municipality of Fairview registers our opposition to, and hereby protest against the formation of a School division by uniting Fairview Municipality with adjacent Local Improvement Districts, as the establishment of such a division would simply mean that the Province would be shifting its responsibility for education and the burden of costs onto one municipality instead of spreading it over a larger area; and

Be it further resolved that the Department of Education, and the Alberta School Trustees' Association send representation to the Rowell commission on Dominion Provincial relations when it sits in Edmonton to impress on that body the seriousness of the school problems in Alberta, and the fact that the cost should be spread over the Dominion instead of concentrating on one municipality.<sup>63</sup>

### Joining The Division

When a school division was formed the rural area was automatically a part of the unit, but a village or town had a choice. The following excerpt of a letter states the three possible solutions for a Rural High School district.

The best method of dealing with rural high school districts within divisional boundaries, when a village district is included, is to have the village enter the division. There is sometimes a difficulty

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<sup>63</sup>Fairview Rural High School minute book, January 21, 1938.



here in that the village district may not wish to be included in the division. We are finding, however, that in a great many instances villages do wish to be included in divisions, since then they are likely to continue to be high school centres or to be established as high school centres if this has not already taken place.

A second plan is to have the village school district continue to operate the rural high school as a part of its own organization. The divisional board can then enter into an agreement with the village board for the education of the pupils attending, or wishing to attend, from the adjacent rural districts. The divisional board can agree to pay a lump sum to the village board or pay fees at a certain rate for each pupil in attendance from its districts at the village school.

A third plan would be that of having the divisional board operate the rural high school and of having the village board enter into an agreement with it for the payment of a lump sum or fees for the village pupils. This plan cannot work satisfactorily if suitable arrangements cannot be made for a school building. Naturally a divisional board cannot go into a village district not included in the division and build and equip a school there. A divisional board, if it is required to build, would want to erect a school in a district included in the division.<sup>64</sup>

The first proposal was the logical choice for Rural High Schools that could not operate independently. Only larger villages or towns that were natural population centres could remain outside of the division, and force the larger unit to sign an agreement for the education of rural pupils. This was particularly true of the schools in the Peace River area, except for Rycroft which was near the larger

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<sup>64</sup>Letter from E.L. Fuller, Chief Inspector of Schools, to W.E. Frame, Inspector of Schools, Rockyford Rural High School files, December 5, 1938.





town of Spirit River. Some villages, such as Duchess, lost their opportunity to become centralized schools because they remained outside the divisions too long. Kathyrn, Bow Slope, and Ribstone entered divisions almost immediately and were probably quite content to do so since these schools had trouble maintaining attendance. Of the three schools, only Kathyrn became a centralized high school. Although such schools as Fleet, Kingman, Splan, Spruce Grove, and Dalemead soon entered divisions, centralized high schools were established elsewhere.

Naco, another Rural High School with a low attendance record, found its rural districts divided between Acadia and Neutral Hills School Divisions; and as a result of Naco's remote location, both divisions continued to send pupils to the school. When the school population could not be maintained, the high school was closed and the Acadia School Division made the ruling that "the high school students will be given the opportunity to attend one of our high schools in the Division or attend Consort H.S. and the Board will pay an allowance of \$1.00 per school attendance day."<sup>65</sup>

Rockyford Rural High School suffered perhaps the strangest fate of all. Upon Rockyford refusing to enter the Wheatland Division, the divisional board came to an agree-

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<sup>65</sup>Letter from C.G. Peterson, secretary-treasurer of Acadia School Division, August 4, 1955.





ment with the Rockyford village school and with the Catholic separate school to share the cost of operating the Rural High School. Later when Wheatland complained of bearing an unfair share of the costs, the separate school established its own high school.<sup>66</sup> Soon after, Rockyford joined the Division, but two high schools in a small village proved too much, and the public high school was discontinued.

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<sup>66</sup> Rockyford Rural High School files, 1938-1945.



## CHAPTER IX

### AN EVALUATION OF THE RURAL HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIMENT

Although only nineteen secondary consolidations were ever formed, the Rural High School plan can not be branded a failure. Graduates of these schools today include research chemists, lawyers, doctors, superintendents of schools, and teachers, as well as hundreds of others whose lives were enriched by a high school education. The fact that Rural High Schools operated during the depression years when most parents could not afford to send their children away to school, enabled these schools to render a more valuable service than otherwise would have been possible. An inspector in referring to the Kingman Rural High School pupils said: "I estimate that not more than 10% of them would have found it possible in 1931 to have received high school privileges except in this school."<sup>67</sup>

Individual examples of students who acquired their education under conditions of extreme hardship are by no means rare. Some students travelled long distances on foot or by horse through severe winters, while in other cases parents went to considerable effort to keep their children

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<sup>67</sup>J.W. Russell, Report to the Chief Inspector of Schools. Annual Report Of The Department Of Education, 1931, p. 68.



in school. In spite of their early difficulties, many former Rural High School pupils have become some of our noted public leaders today.

Another feature of the Rural High School was the high quality of leadership that it produced in the community. In his historical research, Isidore Goresky found a great deal of incompetence among trustees and secretary-treasurers of the rural school,<sup>68</sup> but such were apparently not the conditions in the Rural High School. The influence of the leaders of the Rural High School upon Department officials was very much greater than the number of schools formed would indicate. This strong leadership close to the community generally promoted greater community interest in local educational affairs than does the present division. A former secretary expressed this feeling when he said of the Rural High School:

All the school's problems were definitely the problem of a local people, not a job to be passed up by some one a million miles away as far as his knowledge or responsibility to local conditions is concerned.<sup>69</sup>

For a number of reasons (convictions, sentiments, or both) many officials of the Rural High School never accepted the idea of the superiority of the divisional system.

There was no intrinsic reason why the Rural High School should not have been successful in most rural areas

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<sup>68</sup>I. Goresky, op. cit., p. 118.

<sup>69</sup>Letter from G.R. Davey, Fleet, May 26, 1955.



of Alberta. Those educators who attacked the plan did so not because the scheme was of little value, but mainly because it allowed for a "voluntary association" of school districts. In 1935 a publication authorized by Mr. Aberhart, said of the Rural High School: "These consolidations have met a real need, but as they are purely voluntary organizations their development has been slow."<sup>70</sup> Certainly there was a "real need" for rural secondary schools, for the same publications stated that "in at least 50% of our ungraded schools there is no way by which boys and girls who have completed Grade VIII can have access to high school instruction."<sup>71</sup> Although the Rural High School, if compulsory, could have largely solved the rural secondary educational problem, the larger unit had certain advantages.

For any system to be accepted, it must have some advantage in the taxation field. Just as the proponents of the Rural High School had emphasized the economy of a larger district, so the proponents of the division applied the same reasoning to an even larger unit. With centralization there would be more pupils in fewer classrooms and thus a financial saving would be effected. In addition, a school could offer a more diversified program of studies. Also,

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<sup>70</sup>What Is And What Might Be In Rural Education In Alberta, p. 13.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., p. 3.





with the division the irritating problems that the Rural High School had collecting fees and bickering with local districts about grades taught, and grants received, would be overcome.

The Rural High School was burdened with an awkward supervision system when it was situated in the same building or the same school grounds as a public school. What authority did the high school teacher have over children in the lower grades? If the high school teacher acted as principal who paid him for the job? When two teachers shared teaching grades seven to twelve, how was the responsibility for paying salary apportioned between the public school district and the Rural High School; and in administering grants were there two high school rooms in operation or one? APPENDIX G tells how the Rockyford Rural High School settled just such a complex problem. Under a system of divisions these problems would not occur.

Further advantages of the large unit of administration included less duplication of office administration, and the less likelihood of personal reasons affecting the hiring and firing of teachers. However, the use of dormitories or conveyances to make education more accessible to rural pupils could have been applied to either a Rural High School system or the divisional system.

The main value of the Rural High School was that it bridged a gap between the more advanced thinking of a few



educational leaders, and the time when revolutionary changes could be effected. In 1921 the need for rural secondary education was obvious, but not the method to be used. By 1935 the large unit had become recognized by many as the answer to rural education. Progress had brought better roads and better means of transportation; thus the large centralization of all grades, typical of a division, was now more practical. In 1936 with the enactment of legislation providing for the formation of divisions, the secondary consolidation had served its purpose. The era of the Rural High School was over.



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## APPENDIX A

AN ACT TO AMEND THE SCHOOL ORDINANCE  
(ASSENTED TO APRIL 19, 1921.)Secondary Consolidated School Districts

"40x. Two or more adjoining school districts may consolidate in the manner hereinafter provided by the formation of a new district for the purpose of establishing and maintaining therein a school or schools for the education of pupils who have completed the work of Grade VII or Grade VIII of the Public School Course as classified by the regulations of the Department of Education, and a district so formed shall be known as a secondary consolidated school district.

"40y. The provisions of this Ordinance relating to the formation and establishment of a consolidated school district shall, mutatis mutandis, apply to the formation and establishment of a secondary consolidated school district except as otherwise herein provided.

"(2) If rural districts only are included within the proposed secondary consolidated school district, then upon the approval of the boundaries thereof, and upon the presentation of a petition in the form prescribed signed by at least 25 per cent. of the resident ratepayers of each district therein, the Minister may authorize a vote to be taken of the resident ratepayers of the total area included within the proposed secondary consolidated district on the question of consolidation as nearly as may be in accordance with the provision of sections 40c and 40d hereof.

"(3) If there is a village or town district together with one or more rural districts within the proposed secondary consolidated school district, then upon the approval of the boundaries thereof and upon the presentation of a petition in the form prescribed signed by at least 25 per cent. of the resident ratepayers of each district therein, the Minister may authorize a vote to be taken of the resident ratepayers of the area comprising the said rural district or districts on the question of consolidation as nearly as may be in accordance with the provisions of sections 40c and 40d hereof.





"If the majority of the votes cast in the area comprising the said rural district or districts be in favour of consolidation the Minister may thereupon direct the board of such village or town district to pass a resolution approving or disapproving of the proposed consolidation, and thereafter the procedure in respect to such resolution, and a demand for a vote on the question of consolidation, and the taking of the vote, if demanded, in such village or town district shall be the same as nearly as may be as provided in subsections 2 to 6 inclusive of section 40e hereof.

"(4) If there are two or more village or town districts together with one or more rural districts in the proposed secondary consolidated school district, then upon the approval of the boundaries thereof and upon the presentation of a petition in the form prescribed signed by at least 25 per cent. of the resident ratepayers of each district therein, the Minister may authorize a vote to be taken of the resident ratepayers of the area included in the said rural district or districts on the question of consolidation as nearly as may be in accordance with the provisions of sections 40c and 40d hereof.

"If a majority of the votes cast in the total area included in the said rural district or districts be in favour of consolidation the Minister may then direct the board or village or town district within the proposed secondary consolidated district to cause a vote to be taken on the question of consolidation and said vote shall be taken in each of such village or town districts as nearly as may be in accordance with the provisions of subsection 6 of section 40e hereof.

"(5) If the proposed secondary consolidated school district contains village or town districts only, then upon the approval of the boundaries thereof and upon the presentation of a petition in the form prescribed signed by at least 25 per cent. of the resident ratepayers of each of such districts, the Minister may direct the board of each of such districts to cause a vote to be taken on the question of consolidation, and said vote shall be taken in each of such districts as nearly as may be in accordance with the provisions of subsection 6 of section 40e hereof.

"(6) Any district which has been declared a village district under the provisions of section 95 of The School Assessment Ordinance for the purposes of assessment and taxation may be deemed a village district for the purposes of sections 40x to 40z inclusive of this Ordinance, if the Minister so decides, and the decision of the Minister as to



whether such district shall be deemed a village district under this subsection shall be final.

"40z. Upon being satisfied that all the requirements with reference to taking the vote have been substantially complied with, if a majority of the votes cast in the total area of the proposed secondary consolidated district have been in favour of consolidation when there is no town or village district therein; or if there is a town or village district in the proposed secondary consolidated district and a majority of the votes cast in the remaining area have been in favour of consolidation, and the board of such town or village district has by resolution as provided in subsection 2 of section 40e hereof approved of the proposed consolidation, or in the event of a vote in such town or village district having been demanded, and a majority of the votes cast are in favour of consolidation; or if there are two or more village or town districts either with or without one or more rural districts in the proposed secondary consolidated district and a majority of the votes cast in each of such village or town districts as well as in the area comprising the rural district or districts (if any) are in favour of consolidation, then the Minister may by order, notice of which shall be published in the official gazette, erect such school districts as are included within the boundaries of the proposed consolidation into a secondary consolidated school district.

"40aa. Every secondary consolidated school district formed as hereinbefore provided shall be entitled 'The . . . . . Secondary Consolidated School District No. . . . . of the Province of Alberta,' and shall be given such name as the Minister shall designate in the order forming the same. Such secondary consolidated school districts shall be numbered consecutively, the first of such districts to be established to be assigned the number 1, and the Minister shall have power to change the name of any secondary consolidated school district in accordance with the provisions of section 35 hereof.

"40ab. After the erection of a secondary consolidated school district the Minister shall have the power to alter the boundaries hereof by adding to or taking from the area of any district which forms a part of the secondary consolidated school district.

"40ac. The Minister may authorize notices to be posted and a vote to be taken in any district as nearly as may be in accordance with the provisions of sections 40c and 40d



hereof if such district is a rural district, or in accordance with the provisions of subsection 6 of section 40e hereof if such district is a village or town district, for the purpose of ascertaining if the majority of the resident ratepayers thereof are in favour of the union of such district with an adjacent secondary consolidated district. If a majority of all the votes cast have been in favour of such union or consolidation, and if the same has been approved by the board of the secondary consolidated district then the Minister may by order, notice of which shall be published in the official gazette, unite such district with the secondary consolidated district.

"40ad. The publication in the official gazette of the notice of the order erecting any school districts into a secondary consolidated school district or uniting any district or districts with an existing secondary consolidated school district or altering the boundaries of a secondary consolidated district by adding to or taking from the area of any district which forms a part of the secondary consolidated district shall be final and conclusive evidence that all matters required preliminary to such order have been complied with.

"40ae. The board of trustees of a secondary consolidated school district shall consist of one trustee for each district in the secondary consolidated school district, except for a district therein containing a town, for which there shall be two trustees.

"Within fifteen (15) days after the erection of a secondary consolidated school district the board of trustees of each rural and village district therein shall appoint one of their number, and the board of trustees of each town district therein shall appoint two of their number to represent such district or districts on the board of trustees of the secondary consolidated district, and the trustees so appointed shall constitute the board of the secondary consolidated district and shall hold office during their terms of office as trustees of the districts respectively represented by them, and shall within ten (10) days after the appointment of the last of them as aforesaid as trustees of the secondary consolidated district take the declaration of office and meet to organize the board in accordance with the provisions of this Ordinance, and to transact such other business as may be necessary.

"Whenever a vacancy shall occur in the board of trustees of a secondary consolidated school district it shall be filled as above provided.





"(2) Upon the union of any district with a secondary consolidated school district in accordance with section 40ac hereof the board of trustees of such district uniting with the secondary consolidated district shall forthwith appoint one of their number to represent such district on the board of trustees of the secondary consolidated district, and upon taking the declaration required by this Ordinance such trustee shall become a member of the board of the secondary consolidated district.

"40af. In the event of a secondary consolidated school district being formed by the union of only two districts neither of which contains a town the two trustees appointed by the boards of such districts as trustees of the secondary consolidated school district, after taking the oath of office, shall forthwith under their hand appoint an additional trustee who shall hold office until the next annual meeting and henceforth after the completion of all other business at the annual meeting the two trustees shall in like manner select an additional trustee, and in the event of the two trustees appointed by the boards of their own districts being unable to agree as to the selection on an additional trustee as aforesaid such trustee shall be appointed by the Minister.

"40ag. An annual meeting of the ratepayers of a secondary consolidated school district shall be held not later than the twentieth day of January in each year commencing at two o'clock in the afternoon, standard time, and the business thereat transacted as nearly as may be in accordance with the provisions of this Ordinance respecting the annual meetings of consolidated school districts, except that no trustees shall be elected at such meeting.

"40ah. The trustees of every secondary consolidated school district shall be a corporation under the name of 'The Board of Trustees of . . . . . Secondary Consolidated School District of the Province of Alberta, and shall have the same powers and duties as are conferred and imposed by this Ordinance upon the trustees of consolidated school districts, except that provision shall be made by such board for the education only of pupils who have completed the work of Grade VII or Grade VIII of the Public School Course as classified by the regulations of the Department of Education, and except as otherwise in this Ordinance provided.





"40ai. The board of trustees of every secondary consolidated school district shall cause to be apportioned annually among the school districts included in such district the amount required for school purposes during the current year as provided in the School Assessment Ordinance.

"40aj. The provisions of this Ordinance respecting the conveyance of pupils shall not apply to a secondary consolidated school district."



## APPENDIX B

## QUESTIONNAIRE

Rural High Schools of Alberta

1. What influenced your district to form a rural high school?
2. What problems hampered the formation of such a district?
3. On what basis did each school district concerned share the costs of education?
4. Were there any particular problems in financing the school, and if so, what were they?
5. Did any problems arise from inadequate teaching facilities, and if so, please explain?
6. Generally speaking, were the qualifications of teachers in your rural high school satisfactory?
7. Was a dormitory operated in connection with your rural high school, and if so, did it prove to be satisfactory?
8. Do you feel the number of graduates from your high school justified the establishment of a rural high school?
9. Why was your rural high school district discontinued?
10. Do you know of any additional information that might be of value to this research?
11. Did you have any official position in connection with the Rural High School, and if so, please state?



## APPENDIX C

LETTER TO THE RATEPAYERS OF THE ROCKYFORD  
RURAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Rockyford, Alta.,  
August 29, 1925.

To the Resident Ratepayers of the  
School Districts in the vicinity of  
Rockyford:

There has been considerable agitation during the past few months concerning the lack of educational facilities in this part of the country for students who have passed the eighth grade or public school examinations. In many cases these young people are being sent away to other communities where it is possible to attend high school and in other cases the parents are moving to the cities to enable them to continue the education of their children. In the former instance the children are usually sent to live with strangers at a time when they most need the influence of their own homes and in either case their education is carried on at tremendous expense to their parents or guardians. Worse still, perhaps the larger number of these students are compelled for pecuniary or other reasons to leave school altogether and this at a time when their unfinished educations are insufficient to earn for them a livelihood and their youth prevents them from earning a living by manual labor. Some will say, as they have said since the beginning of time, that what was good enough for the parents is also good enough for the children but people who adopt that attitude are not usually the ones who are responsible for the advance of civilization and it is to the credit of Canada that these people are very much in the minority at the present time.

The value of a high school education is a subject that has been worn somewhat threadbare but it is none the less important and we hope to make it the foremost thought in the minds of the ratepayers of this community for the next few days at least by making an organized drive for the establishment in Rockyford of a Rural High School.

Full provision has been made in the School Ordinance of the Province (sections 56 to 69) for the formation of a Rural High School district and the Department of Education is willing to do all in its power to assist in the organization. The Government grant is very liberal but in ad-



dition to the regular grant they will contribute a high percentage toward supplying the necessary equipment. The cost of building and operating a High School of this kind is indeed moderate so far as the individual taxpayer is concerned owing to the fact that it is borne by a much larger community than that comprising the ordinary public school district.

Each separate school district desiring to join the proposed H.S.D. must submit to the Department of Education a petition signed by not less than 25% of the resident ratepayers in that district asking the Department to authorize a vote to be taken. For this purpose, blank petitions have been furnished to interested parties in the various school districts who will undertake to secure the required number of signatures. If a sufficient number of districts are interested the Department will send a representative into the community to explain the Act governing the formation of the Rural High School District and will furnish all necessary figures to show what will be the probable rate of taxation.

The vote will be taken over the petitioning districts as a whole and not as individual districts except that Glennan S.D., in which Rockyford is situated, will not be allowed to vote until the outlying school districts have voted in favor of the scheme. If a majority of the votes in the outlying districts are in favor of the High School then Glennan S.D. will be allowed to vote separately. Provided the votes of Glennan S.D. show a majority in favor of the High School it is only necessary for the Minister of Education to approve of the scheme and determine the boundaries.





# PUBLIC NOTICE

## VOTE ON CONSOLIDATION

PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given that a Meeting of the Resident Ratepayers of the proposed Rockyford Rural High Consolidated School District of the Province of Alberta, residing within the boundaries defined on the map below, except those ratepayers residing in .....

Rockyford School District, No. 2317,  
(Name of District, if any, containing Town or Village, to be inserted here).

will be held at Mr. Pust's Office, Rockyford, in the Province of Alberta, on  
Saturday, the Ninth day of January,

19 26, at the hour of 2.30 o'clock in the afternoon, for the purpose of voting on the question as to whether the districts or parts of districts or unorganized territory included within the boundaries defined on said map should be erected into a Consolidated Rural School District.

The Poll shall remain open till 8.30 p.m.

West Meridian 4<sup>th</sup>

Rg. 24

Rg. 23

Rg. 22

31	32	33	34	35	36	31	32	33	34	35	36	31	32	33	34	35	36
30	29	28	27	26	25	30	29	28	27	26	25	30	29	28	27	26	25
19	20	21	22	23	24	19	20	21	22	23	24	19	20	21	22	23	24
18	17	16	15	14	13	18	17	16	15	14	13	18	17	16	15	14	13
7	8	9	10	11	12	7	8	9	10	11	12	7	8	9	10	11	12
6	5	4	3	2	1	6	5	4	3	2	1	6	5	4	3	2	1

Tr. 27

31	32	33	34	35	36	31	32	33	34	35	36	31	32	33	34	35	36
30	29	28	27	26	25	30	29	28	27	26	25	30	29	28	27	26	25
19	20	21	22	23	24	19	20	21	22	23	24	19	20	21	22	23	24
18	17	16	15	14	13	18	17	16	15	14	13	18	17	16	15	14	13
7	8	9	10	11	12	7	8	9	10	11	12	7	8	9	10	11	12
6	5	4	3	2	1	6	5	4	3	2	1	6	5	4	3	2	1
31	32	33	34	35	36	31	32	33	34	35	36	31	32	33	34	35	36
30	29	28	27	26	25	30	29	28	27	26	25	30	29	28	27	26	25
19	20	21	22	23	24	19	20	21	22	23	24	19	20	21	22	23	24
18	17	16	15	14	13	18	17	16	15	14	13	18	17	16	15	14	13
7	8	9	10	11	12	7	8	9	10	11	12	7	8	9	10	11	12
6	5	4	3	2	1	6	5	4	3	2	1	6	5	4	3	2	1
31	32	33	34	35	36	31	32	33	34	35	36	31	32	33	34	35	36
30	29	28	27	26	25	30	29	28	27	26	25	30	29	28	27	26	25
19	20	21	22	23	24	19	20	21	22	23	24	19	20	21	22	23	24
18	17	16	15	14	13	18	17	16	15	14	13	18	17	16	15	14	13
7	8	9	10	11	12	7	8	9	10	11	12	7	8	9	10	11	12
6	5	4	3	2	1	6	5	4	3	2	1	6	5	4	3	2	1

Tr. 26

Tr. 25

This Notice is given by authority of the Minister of Education.

J. T. ROSS,  
Deputy Minister of Education.



## APPENDIX E

C.R. WALROD ANSWERS THE CHARGES  
OF THE LANDSEER DISTRICT

March 20, 1931.

Department of Education,  
Edmonton, Alta.

Gentlemen:

The Board of Trustees of this district met yesterday and referring to the application of Landseer S.D. No. 3960 for permission to withdraw their support from the High School district have instructed me to write to you and point out that the statements made by them in their application are not supported by facts or necessity.

Firstly, the most distant pupil attending our High School from a point within the district is but slightly more than nine and one-half miles.

Secondly, no consistent or responsible attempt has ever been made by the parents of Landseer S.D. to provide living accommodations for their children in Rockyford. On the contrary, all efforts made by other parties to provide that accommodation have failed through lack of support. Naturally, a boarding house cannot operate without boarders. There are several empty houses in Rockyford at present of all kinds and sizes and no attempt is being made to have one opened for students, even though we have a very capable lady in town who would be glad to take charge.

Thirdly, the Landseer S.D. is connected with Rockyford by the best road in this part of the country and no child lives more than a mile from this main trunk road.

Fourthly, their final paragraph is an appeal for sympathy and we must admit that it is just cause for the most profound grief that these poor, helpless, little children (from sixteen to nineteen years of age) are compelled to enter a closed car and travel from fifteen to twenty minutes over a trunk road in order to reach the protection of their parental domiciles.





Mr. H.A. Ruppe is chairman of the Landseer S.D. and is their representative on our Board. He admitted in the meeting of our Board that this action was being taken by them because they were not getting as much consideration as they claim is due them. They have a representative on the Board and no other district has any more. They favor certain types of social events being carried on in the High School building with which the Board hesitates to agree. This claim of their's is inconsistent with their statement that "these extreme distances" impose a hardship on the pupils as the parents have voiced no objections to their children staying out until midnight or even later.

The whole argument would be petty and even ludicrous were it not for the fact that other rural districts in the consolidation have been paying taxes for years and in some cases sending no children of their own in order to make it possible for the children from Landseer, of whom they claim there are now six attending, to obtain Grade XI standing. These districts have long felt the drain and would have welcomed dissolution at the beginning of these hard times but their public pride and interest would not allow them to make such a selfish suggestion. Now, however, if this application is to be seriously considered by the Department, another sheaf of applications will soon be in the mails and our beautiful and efficient little High School will degenerate into the club house for which the Coxy's Army from Landseer is now clamoring.

Yours very truly,

Rockyford Rural High School District No. 3,

per

Sec'y-Treas.





## APPENDIX F

AN ACT TO AMEND THE SCHOOL ASSESSMENT ORDINANCE  
(ASSENTED TO APRIL 19, 1921)Secondary Consolidated School Districts

4. Section 90a is added to the said Ordinance as follows:

"90a. (1) (a) The board of trustees of every secondary consolidated school district shall cause to be apportioned annually among the school districts included in such district the amount required for school purposes during the current year.

"(b) If rural districts only are included in the secondary consolidated district there shall be apportioned to each of such districts such portion of the said amount as the assessed value of the land liable to taxation for school purposes in such district bears to the total assessed value of the land of all the school districts included in the secondary consolidated school district, and the assessed value of the land in each of the said districts as fixed for the purposes of the Supplementary Revenue Tax shall be taken as the assessed value for the purposes hereof.

"(c) If the secondary consolidated school district contains a village or town district or districts or a district which has been declared a village district under the provisions of Section 95 of this Ordinance then the amount to be apportioned to each district therein shall be arrived at and determined as follows:

"The board of the secondary consolidated school district shall appoint a valuator who shall before the 31st day of December in each year make a valuation of all the real and personal property in each district within the consolidation of such districts which is liable to assessment and taxation in village districts under this Ordinance; provided that in arriving at the valuation of the land exclusive of buildings or other improvements thereon in each of said districts the assessed value of said land for the purposes of the Supplementary Revenue Tax shall be taken as the valuation of the land for the purposes hereof.

"The board of the secondary consolidated school district shall before the 15th day of January in each year notify in writing the board of each district included within the



consolidation of the valuation placed upon the real and personal property in such district as above provided, and the board of each of such districts may within ten (10) days after the receipt of said notice appeal against such valuation to the board of the secondary consolidated school district by giving notice in writing of such appeal, setting out the grounds on which the appeal is made. The board of the secondary consolidated school district shall within ten (10) days after the time fixed for receiving notice of appeals, and upon giving five (5) days' notice to the boards of the districts affected, meet to hear and determine all appeals of which notice has been so given, and for such purpose may take evidence on oath, and at the close of such hearing either allow or disallow such appeals in whole or in part, and the decision of the board thereon shall be final.

"After all appeals (if any) have been heard and dealt with as aforesaid there shall be apportioned to each of such districts such portion of the amount required for school purposes for the current year as the valuation of the real and personal property in such district bears to the total valuation of the real and personal property of all the districts included in the secondary consolidated school district and determined as aforesaid.

"(2) (a) The board of a secondary consolidated school district shall on or before the 15th day of February in each year transmit to the board of trustees of each district in such secondary consolidated school district a certified statement of the amount to be paid by each of such districts during the current year, and the said boards of trustees shall cause the same to be raised by taxation on the taxable property in such districts in the same manner as other taxes for the establishment, support and maintenance of the schools therein.

"(b) It shall be the duty of the boards of each of said districts to pay to the board of the secondary consolidated school district on demand the amounts required from time to time for school purposes, provided, however, that the total amount demanded does not exceed the total estimate transmitted by the board of the secondary consolidated school district to the board of each of said districts as above provided."



## APPENDIX G

C.R. WALROD EXPLAINS THE ORGANIZATION  
OF THE ROCKYFORD RURAL HIGH SCHOOL

October 18, 1933.

Mr. E.L. Fuller,  
Inspector of High Schools,  
Edmonton, Alberta.

Dear Sir;

We wish to acknowledge receipt of your report covering the Rockyford Rural High S.D. No. 3 and to thank you for your careful survey of the equipment, teachers and activities as well as for your suggestions which will enable us to increase the standard of efficiency.

We wish, however, to call your attention to the paragraph under the heading of "General Organization" which could conceivably interfere with the payments of grants. It is apparent that you did not fully understand the agreement between the two school districts and I am writing to attempt to correct your impressions. In the first place, Miss Korczynski is hired by the Rockyford Public School District No. 3317. Her salary is all paid by that district, but the payments made by them for the last half of the school year are refunded to them by the Rural High S.D.. In addition to these refunds, all operating expenses such as fuel, janitor's services, etc; are also paid by the Rural High S.D.. The grants are paid to the Rockyford Public S.D. No. 3317 by the Department but turned over by them to the High School District as per terms of the agreement. I refer to the grants paid on the senior Public School room of which Miss Korczynski is teacher. The agreement between the districts provides accommodation for the junior high school pupils in Miss Korczynski's room and because of this, it is considered advisable for the Rural High School teacher, Mr. Bradwell, to exercise a certain amount of supervision over this room. It also causes the High School Board to take a special interest in the choice of teacher to be employed by the Public School Board for their senior room. The Rural High School could not draw grants for the room taught



by Miss Korczynski unless special arrangements were made with the Department and it is much easier to operate strictly within the Act.

The Rural High School employs only one teacher, Mr. Chas. Bradwell, and draws only one grant, namely, \$4.00 per day.

Yours truly,

Sec'y-Treas.







